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ABSTRACT

This collection of four speeches given at a symposium in October 1977 all deal with a particular aspect of popular culture--reflecting the values, convictions, and patterns of thought generally dispersed through and approved by society. The terms popular and culture are defined separately and two definitions for the complete term are considered--one dealing with products, the other with activities. The study of popular culture can bring people to a deeper understanding of today's society, therefore the use of popular culture materials, i.e., music, in the classroom, and in libraries is advocated. Guidelines for their acquisition and utilization are presented. Although there are problems connected with both, and these are discussed, there is a trend in this country toward the utilization of such materials. A popular culture librarian discusses this trend and his education and role in building such a collection at Bowling Green University. (MRR)

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CURRENT ISSUES SYMPOSIUM II

POPULAR CULTURE
AND
THE LIBRARY

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POPULAR CULTURE AND THE LIBRARY:

PROCEEDINGS OF SYMPOSIUM II

October 28, 1977

College of Library Science
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky

Wayne A. Wiegand, Assistant Professor, Editor

Panel Members

Dr. Wayne A. Wiegand, Moderator

Dr. Russel B. Nye, Distinguished Professor
Department of English
Michigan State University
"Popular Culture as a Genre"

Dr. B. Lee Cooper, Vice President for Academic Affairs
Newberry College
"Popular Culture: Teaching Problems and Challenges"

Dr. Gordon Stevenson, Associate Professor
School of Library and Information Studies
State University of New York - Albany
"Popular Culture and the Academic Librarian"

Mr. William L. Schurk, Director
Audio Center and Popular Culture Library
Bowling Green State University
"The Popular Culture Library at Bowling Green
State University"

Symposium sponsored by

Office for Continuing Education
College of Library Science
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky
Mrs. Joy Terhune, Acting Director

WIEGAND: Good morning, and welcome to the "Popular Culture Symposium," second in a series of symposia sponsored by the College of Library Science at the University of Kentucky. The symposium series is designed to focus attention on topics of interest to the world of librarianship by exploring their dimensions with experts in the field.

Popular culture as a subject of professional interest is something relatively unfamiliar to librarians, whether they be from the academic, public, special or school sectors. Normally librarians do not think of popular culture as a genre, and certainly not as area for serious collection. The objective of today's symposium is to raise the visibility of popular culture in the library community. To do so, we have invited a panel of four people, each of whom have an area of expertise in popular culture media. We organized the program to follow a natural progression. We have asked Dr. Russel Nye to address the subject of popular culture as a valid area for study. He will be followed by Dr. B. Lee Cooper, who will discuss the genre's potential for academia in particular. Then in the afternoon session we will focus on the more practical aspects of popular culture for libraries and librarians. Dr. Gordon Stevenson will look at it from this angle, and Mr. William Schurk will share some of his experiences as the librarian of the nation's largest popular culture collection at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio.

Dr. Russel Nye, Distinguished Professor of English at Michigan State University, has been heavily involved in the study of popular culture for the past fifteen years. He received his A. B. degree at Oberlin College, his M. A. and Ph. D. degrees at the University of Wisconsin. In 1945 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his biography, George Bancroft: Brahmin Rebel. He has been author, co-author and editor of nearly thirty books since then, as well as nearly fifty articles. In 1970 he published The Unembarrassed Muse: Popular Arts in America, which has since become a textbook for many popular culture courses. Dr. Nye is past

President of the Popular Culture Association,
and is currently on the Board of Editors for
the Journal of Popular Culture. He will discuss
"Popular Culture as a Genre." Will you welcome
please, Dr. Russel Nye?

DR. RUSSEL NYE

Distinguished Professor
Department of English
Michigan State University

"Popular Culture as a Genre"

The most useful thing I can do at the opening of this conference is to attempt to define our terms, to stake out the field. In speaking about popular culture, we immediately (and I think properly) are asked, "What do you mean, popular culture? What are you talking about?" I doubt that all panel members will agree with my definitions, but at least my attempt may provide a basis for discussion. As opening speaker I have another function, to introduce another question, "What good is it? How can we use it?" I don't pretend to have definite answers in either case--I represent the speculative part of this program, I suppose, the others the operative. Putting it all together, we hope to arrive at some kind of answer to these questions, leading to another, "What can librarians and libraries do about it?"

To the first question, "What do you mean, popular?" Here I turn to John Cawelti's discussion published in American Studies: An International Newsletter, in Winter, 1971. He writes:

Popular can mean that which is most used, purchased, enjoyed or practiced by a large number of people. But popular can also refer to the culture of non-elite groups. Thus, working-class culture, middle-class culture, or various minority sub-cultures are commonly referred to as popular, and constitute a major area of interest for scholars in the field. It is, of course, quite possible for something to be popular in one sense and not in the other. Best-selling novels are clearly popular culture in our first sense, yet they do not form an important part of working-class culture since novels are purchased and read largely by members

of the upper and middle classes. Still a third conception of popular culture defines it as culture which crosses class lines to become part of the life-style of all classes or subcultures in a particular society. This would be the case with highly successful television programs and films, for example, or with those musical groups like the Beatles who appealed to almost all groups in American and English society. Fourth, there is the definition of popular as the antithesis to the serious, i.e., those aspects of culture related to relaxation, recreation and entertainment and generally opposed to work on one hand and Art with a capital A on the other. In other words, popular culture is what people do when they are not working.

Finally, there is that conception of popular as defined by the content and character of those media of communication which reach the largest possible publics-i.e., the mass media or mass communications, and the new cultural forms and processes that these media seem to be evolving.

All right, "What do you mean, culture?" The word has a variety of meanings, of course, some of which are not only different but mutually exclusive. Kroeber and Kluckhohn, in fact, have identified one hundred and sixty definitions of culture accepted in one way or another by various disciplines. In its figurative sense, culture, since the sixteenth century, has referred to the improvement and refinement of the mind by education and training. In the nineteenth century, Matthew Arnold defined the word as "acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known or said in the world," making explicit a meaning that is widely accepted today. Later, anthropologists added another meaning: that is, the sum of attainments and the learned behavior patterns of any specific period, race, or people. Sociologists have developed still another: "that complex whole includes knowledge, belief, art, custom, and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society."

Some distinction must be made, of course, by students of popular culture, in order to control the methods and

materials with which they wish to work. I should offer, as a guide, the following: culture includes the things that the people of a particular time, place, and area do; the way they do them; the ways they think and feel about them; and the ways in which they conceive of them and react to them. This includes the tools they use, the values and symbols their society recognizes, the patterns of their daily lives. But the important point to be made is that whatever concept of culture we hold, it is primarily a tool rather than a constriction--it should be a definition which allows us to study the materials we want to study.

"What, then, is popular culture?" Here we must consider two definitions, one dealing with products--that which is produced and consumed--and another dealing with activities, with what people do. This is the difference between the purchase of a comic book and a bowling ball, between reading a detective story and customizing a car. In the first sense, we may use the term popular culture to describe those productions, artistic and commercial, designed for mass consumption and capable of reproduction, which appeal to and express the tastes and understanding of a significant portion of the public, free of control by minority standards. They tend to reflect the values, convictions, and patterns of thought generally dispersed through and approved by society.

Obviously, there are shades of gray in any such definition--popular fades toward folk in one direction and elite in another. Henry Glassie, in Patterns in Material Folk Culture (revised edition, 1975) has noted the constant movement from folk into popular (and one may add from popular into elite)-- of the folksong from Appalachia to Nashville; from Texas tacos to franchises such as Tacos Bell; of the sap-bucket from maple tree to magazine holder in suburban living room. Categories, however, should not prevent us from studying popular culture or from asking the questions we want answered. We all, in fact, constantly deal with culture in all three categories at once without being bothered by it--one can believe, as I do, that country music is wonderful, that a horseshoe brings luck, and that Emily Dickinson is the greatest poet who ever lived. Similarly, what we buy and sell and do may fall into one category or all three. Popular culture is more often a complicated synthesis of motives rather than simple choice.

Thus to the second phase of our definition of popular culture. The first deals with products--what about the things people do, such as playing golf, or bowling, or fishing, or hunting? What of those who collect beer cans, stamps, records, matchbooks, or Depression glass? Or those who race cars, or rally, or have old car parades? Or those who sing in barbershop quartets, or who square dance? Can popular culture be defined as particular kinds of activities, different from other kinds of activities? Certainly seeing a football game as a spectator, and playing golf are not the same. I should say that the key lies in recognizing the kinds of activity we may call popular:

It must be open and available to more than a specific class: educational, economic, social, etc. Restrictions are imposed from the inside, not the outside, on grounds of interest, competencies, etc. (An example might be fox hunting and rabbit hunting.)

It must not be specifically work-related, i.e., not primarily to make a living. (The auto mechanic, for example, may race stocks, but so may the non-auto mechanic. The necessary skills are not specifically job-related).

It is primarily a leisure-time activity, done by choice rather than necessity, willingly, for enjoyment or some degree of self-fulfillment. (There is a distinction between what people do when they're not making a living--or as Santayana suggested, when they're not fighting for survival or avoiding pain--and what they do for purposes of play.)

It must have general social as well as group approval, usually within relatively narrow parameters. (A group whose leisure-time activity is dynamiting fish, or collecting pornography, or stealing hubcaps does not qualify as popular culture. These may be available to all, self-fulfilling and not work-related, but they lack general approval.)

Putting all these definitions together, then, we come to the central question of popular culture study--what does it mean? Why do people do, make, sell, and buy popular culture? What do popular culture products and activities mean, what message do they have? How are they structured, how are they done, made, or consumed?

What is their history and development? Put concisely, the answer is that answers to questions such as these tell us things about people and society that we would never otherwise know, or know so well.

The study of popular culture, done seriously and with proper purpose and methodology, can open up new areas of evidence which can contribute greatly to what we know about the attitudes, ideas, and values of a society at a given place or time; in so doing, we find a broader and deeper understanding of our society. This statement is based on two assumptions:

1. Popular culture represents the greatest single shared experience of society (other than home and church), the broadest common experience in which an individual participates. Studies have shown, for example, that approximately half the people of the United States read comics in various forms on a regular basis; television ratings indicate that about half the population is watching football games on New Year's Day. Our common culture is based to a great extent on popular expressions of our dreams, our tastes, our social bonds. Generations are dated by their songs (the Presley generation, the Crosby generation); by their television programs (the Milton Berle generation, the Laugh-In generation); by their heroes (the Dempsey generation, the Louis generation, the Ali generation). We all have such identifications by which we define ourselves (for popular culture defines as well as integrates)--the sports car people and the stock car people; the sailboat people and the powerboat people; the do-it-yourselfers and the collectors. Such common cultural experiences are powerful binding factors in society; in modern mass society they comprise perhaps the greatest single set of forces working against individual isolation. Study of popular culture can provide an unusually sensitive and accurate image of the attitudes and concerns of the society for which it is created, and furnishes for the cultural historian a window into the landscape of the era to which it had appeal and meaning. The person who wishes to know how it was to live in the eighteenth century, for example, would do well to study the ballads, cartoons, songs, tales, jokes, games, artifacts, and other aspects of the popular culture of those times, just as the person who wishes to understand the nineteen-seventies must look at today's sports, novels, magazines, comics, advertisements, movies, and TV to see what our life is like. The world of popular culture is our own; knowing it is a way of knowing ourselves.

2. Popular culture gives us reference points, a kind of language, with which people can communicate with each other. The artifacts of popular culture become embedded in our vocabulary and serve us as symbols. We cannot speak of Tarzan, Shangri-la, Snoopy, the Dagwood sandwich or the famous duo of masked man and Indian without reference to the popular culture of our time, just as an earlier era spoke of Babbits, Pollyannas, and sheiks. We speak of game-plans, strikeouts, of being saved by the bell. We find it fitting that our first atomic-powered submarine was named The Nautilus after Captain Nemo's in Jules Verne's novel; or that our first satellite ship is named The Enterprise, after Captain Kirk's. Popular culture is, then, an important means of forming and preserving ideas, attitudes, and values; it provides metaphors for expressing common experience; it gives us information we can obtain in no other way about the basic ideologies and operative ideas that drive society.

But there are, naturally, certain caveats in the study of popular culture. It should be studied as a discipline, as we study other parts of our history and environment. It should always be considered in the context of the whole culture, just as elite culture too should be studied as part of the whole. It must be approached seriously and its materials handled with scholarly respect. It must not be diverted into nostalgia--a pleasant form of sentimentality--or into trivia, which is an amusing party game and nothing more. Those who study popular culture must study it seriously, and ask of it those kinds of questions which elicit answers that matter. Keeping these things in mind, one may use popular culture materials to widen and deepen our awareness of life in the United States then and now, and provide teacher and student with valuable alternatives to traditional ways of understanding ourselves and our civilization.

Thus endeth text and exhortation. What does this mean for libraries and librarians? Those of us who would explore, write about, and teach popular culture studies--and there will be many more to come--have only two sources of materials to turn to, the museum and the library, and if we don't have the materials, we can't work. It's that simple. That's what this conference is about. The other speakers will take it from here.

WIEGAND: As I stated in my initial remarks we organized the program to follow a natural progression. We selected Dr. Nye to identify the validity of popular culture as a genre. The next individual on our panel has written extensively on utilizing popular culture in the classroom both in the secondary and on the higher education level.

Dr. B. Lee Cooper is currently Vice President for Academic Affairs at Newberry College in Newberry, South Carolina. He received his B. A. degree at Bowling Green State University, his M. A. at Michigan State University and his Ph. D. at The Ohio State University. Dr. Cooper will speak on "Popular Culture: Teaching Problems and Challenges." Would you welcome please, Dr. B. Lee Cooper?

DR. B. LEE COOPER

Vice President for Academic Affairs
Newberry College
Newberry, South Carolina

"Popular Culture: Teaching Problems and Challenges"

Introductory Comments

I want to begin my presentation in a somewhat different fashion. I would like to call your attention to the composition of the four-person panel before you. The members of this panel clearly illustrate the different perspectives that should nurture the study of popular culture during the next 25 or 30 years. The panelists consist of Dr. Russel B. Nye, a nationally recognized literary scholar and popular culture theorist,¹ whom you have already met. The man at the far end of the conference table is Dr. Gordon Stevenson. He has written widely, and most perceptively, on several aspects of the librarian's role in respect to the field of popular culture.² His scholarly articles contain assessments and observations which rank among the best analytical statements I have seen in the popular culture area. Mr. Bill Schurk, the man in the middle, is an old and dear friend. We were undergraduates together at Bowling Green State University in Ohio before Bowling Green had anything even resembling a Popular Culture Center. Bill seemed "crazy" then; he is "learned" now. I was a residence hall counselor and spent most of my evenings warning Bill to turn down the volume on his ever-blaring tape recorder. Now, of course, he controls thousands of tapes and phonograph records at the nationally acclaimed Audio Center.

Study the group. Professor Nye, because of his professional writing stature, has added academic legitimacy to the emerging field of popular culture. Frankly, it's comforting to have a Pulitzer Prize-winning author on your side. I would also like to note that when I spoke at popular culture meetings in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio during the past two years there have been at

least two people sharing the platform with me who were graduate students under Professor Nye's direction. It is indeed an honor to appear with a teacher-scholar who exerts so much influence on the minds of both present and future generations of popular culture teachers.

Dr. Gordon Stevenson's writings, designed to assist librarians in interpreting popular culture trends, ought to be read widely by teachers and scholars. He brilliantly delineates library-related needs, and sagely evaluates the successes and failures of the popular culture movement as an academic enterprise. I urge you not only to listen to him this afternoon, but also to enjoy reading his essays in recent issues of Library Trends, Wilson Library Bulletin, Journal of Education for Librarianship, and Advances in Librarianship.

Mr. Bill Schurk, the Audio Librarian at Bowling Green, is a collector, organizer, distributor and academic advisor to hundreds of teachers and scholars in the popular culture field. I have tried to devise a unique way to say, "He has forgotten more than I will ever know about popular music" -- but that is the only way that I can describe him. He bridges the gap between the audio antiquarian or record collecting trivia buff and the classroom teacher by supplying educators with valuable thematic connections and recorded resources to be found in popular songs of the past four decades. And don't forget that he serves a university campus with 16,000 students; Mr. Schurk is constantly responding to requests to provide specific music and general music-related ideas from instructors in academic departments ranging from English to physics. He can tell you how a popular culture librarian can affect a total learning environment.

Now for me! I'm a history teacher, by professional training and personal inclination. I happen to be an academic dean at the moment, but I frequently re-enter the classroom with my lyric sheets and cassette tape player. I am also a propagandist for the use of popular culture materials.³ This morning I will confine my comments to contemporary music because that's the field where I feel most secure. Finally, I must confess that I am a popular music fan. "Fandom" means that for no intellectual reason whatsoever I collect records by

Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Albert King, and the Rolling Stones. It may be difficult for you to understand the distinction between "fans" and "scholars," but it becomes crystal clear to me when I am trying to organize a series of songs for my courses and I desperately need the resource assistance of Bill Schurk, who has assembled a comprehensive collection that goes far beyond numbers possible to any mere fan.

Teaching With Popular Culture Resources

I want to concentrate on the adaptation of popular culture resources to various learning environments. Although I intend to emphasize the resources themselves, I must begin with a few words about learning theory because, as librarians, you should be aware of the varying theoretical constructs of the instructors with whom you are interacting. Faculty members are going to have different attitudes about the utilization of popular culture materials. Not just fundamental "pro" and "con" stances, but complex attitudes concerning the extent to which non-traditional resources should be allowed in their classrooms and the particular manner in which contemporary teaching materials should be used to communicate certain ideas or to support specific instructional methodologies. The perception of varying teaching styles is the most challenging task for an academic librarian. Yet it is imperative for a librarian to get to know each faculty member in order to be able to respond appropriately not only with learning resources, but also with instructional suggestions that will lay the basis for future materials requests. I personally feel that the librarians' teaching function with faculty members has not been stressed enough in academic environments. After all, it's the librarian who brings the vast majority of the new educational material into the primary campus learning center.

By now you are probably saying to yourself, "What educational perspective is this speaker coming from when he recommends the use of popular culture materials?" I've already acknowledged my disciplinary connection. My academic experiences have convinced me of the value of generating reflective thinking through studying controversial social themes. Whenever I use popular

music in an instructional setting, I organize it into thematic patterns that can be readily related to a central reflective question. Philosophically and psychologically, my learning theory roots are directly connected to Socrates' "know thyself" position.⁴ I am also primarily interested in undergraduate, survey level educational experience. I believe that popular culture material has its greatest impact when used with either high school students or freshmen/sophomores at the college level. I've taught several courses utilizing popular music materials. One course was entitled "The Image of American Society in Popular Music;"⁵ another was labeled "Black Music."⁶ I found these classes exciting for me, and stimulating to the students who were involved in both courses. But I firmly believe that the enthusiasm I encountered for popular music resources existed because of prior motivation in respect to my teaching materials, much as any course taught to junior/senior majors is exciting to students because of previous subject-matter interest.

I don't want to be accused of using the hackneyed term "relevance" to sell the idea of utilizing popular music. What I am saying, though, is that basic student enthusiasms can be tapped by using elements of popular culture which are familiar to instructors who are seeking to teach. The learners themselves will readily branch out from the known (recordings) into the unknown (newspapers, magazines, films, and other materials). The students will also be more receptive to and willing to participate in a learning design if they think that their teacher is also a "learner." In the field of popular music, outside of a man like Bill Schurk, I don't know of any individual who knows lyrics of Country and Western, Jazz, Bluegrass, Folk, and Rock songs well enough to say, "Yea, I know everything about that!" When facing classes of 25 to 40 students, teachers will be pleasantly surprised to discover that young people know quite a bit about music -- and it's sometimes particularly intriguing to point out to the students which specific music styles they know most about. When I taught in rural southwestern Ohio, I was frequently amazed at the lack of knowledge of black music among white, rural, middle-class students. My students rarely mentioned songs by Stevie Wonder, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, or Ray Charles -- yet they knew the most obscure tunes of Country singers ranging from Tanya Tucker to Merle Haggard.

Popular music, particularly since the early 1950's, has provided an undeniable minstrel function in American history.⁷ The balladeer has performed an age-old function throughout the history of Western civilization; but for contemporary students the "minstrels" are talking very directly about the pluralism of a confused and confusing society and thus reflecting the conflicting philosophical issues and complex problems facing us today. Although it's relatively easy to select Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, or any of the more noted folk singers of the 1960's to illustrate that lyricists really do say something about our society, I think it's a fundamental error to highlight only the folk poets⁸ and to ignore the fact that the trenchant social commentaries may be found in the rock music of Chuck Berry,⁹ Bob Seeger, Alice Cooper, and Fleetwood Mac. What I want to emphasize, though, is that there are peculiar elements of criticism and acclaim, of love and hate, of cynicism and idealism, of heroes and villains that dominate much of the contemporary music that we hear; these sentiments offer ample teaching resources for a skillful classroom instructor. I don't mean to imply that all popular music is full of rich social analogies; it's not. But, of course, we don't have 400 years of cultural filtration between us and contemporary music, either. So, I'm working with a field that is uncritically loaded with choices and options for selecting learning resources.

Problems Of Propagandizing For The Use Of Popular Culture Resources

Several minutes ago I identified myself as a "propagandist." You might wonder what type of problems I've encountered in propagandizing about teaching with music. I deliberately emphasized the "with" in the previous sentence. I am not a musician. I teach with recorded music, primarily through lyric review. I do not pretend to conduct formal content analysis¹⁰ with my students because I think that this research approach is too systematic and too restrictive to introduce in a survey-level classroom environment. What I attempt to generate is reflective environment which opens student minds to philosophic inquiry. I am more interested in what the music means to each learner than

in what lyric configurations say statistically or even in what the recording artist may have originally intended to say through his or her song. The "receiver" is the person I am concerned about and, as one of several receivers in the classroom, I feel free to introduce my position just as I expect my students to reflect their positions to me. In essence, the thesis that I have tested while teaching popular music is that the pluralistic belief pattern of American society is accurately reflected by the music.

Specifically, what are the problems confronting an individual who is propagandizing for teaching with popular music? Let me cite five typical faculty responses. I am not presenting them in any particular order, and I don't want to imply that one is more of a problem than another. I do want to depict these responses in a kind of psychological or medical framework, because I feel that they represent fairly distinctive syndromes of behavior. The first one I call the "Pandering to Student Whims" syndrome. You may have encountered it yourselves. Proponents of this position argue that popular music can't possibly be a valuable teaching resource because students like it. This goes back to a fairly fundamental learning theory position -- that all real education is misery, and the best thing that can be said about a particular course is that it makes students "miserable;" the next best thing that you can say to a faculty member -- apparently -- is that he or she is miserable and boring.

The second belittling faculty response is the "You must be Ignoring the Really Significant Material" syndrome. I hear this very frequently from my fellow historians. My colleagues contend, "We can barely cover all the necessary material in our classes now, so how can you expect us to introduce that music junk and still get through the Louisiana Purchase and Teapot Dome Scandal?"

The third response is the "Let Him Alone ... He'll Get Over It" syndrome. The idea being expressed in this response is that creative people will sometimes go off the deep end with a particular educational experiment, but they'll eventually drift back to academic reality. The fourth commentary falls into the "I'd Love to Try It, But I've Got a Tin Ear" syndrome. Here the unspoken assumption is that one must be musically talented to

employ music in the classroom. "I don't play the piano, so I can't use music." It takes quite a bit of explanation on my part to convince a skeptical colleague that I don't sing or play either.

The fifth challenge is the one that I consider to be the most serious. This syndrome is "It's a Fine Course Enrichment Idea For a Confirmed Pop Music Freak, But I Don't Know a Damned Thing About Rock 'N' Roll." The position declares that a teacher must have an avocational interest in popular music in order to convert it into an academic resource. "It's easy for you to go to your personal album collection, pick out six records, take them into your class, and demonstrate to your students the differing attitudes toward religious practices in contemporary society. But what about folks like us who don't have backgrounds in popular music?" Of course, the depressing thing is that these teachers are actually saying "We can't learn enough about contemporary music to use it!"

Since I am committed to employing popular culture resources beyond the realm of contemporary music, I decided to test myself. My goal was to approach a popular culture area that I didn't know anything about, that I never liked as a youngster, that I could therefore experiment with in terms of attempting to master it sufficiently to utilize it in my classes. Well, I like television, love motion pictures, and collected baseball cards and comic books as a child; but I had never read more than a couple of science fiction stories in my life. The S-F genre had simply never appealed to me. I decided to spend one summer vacation period reading science fiction books.¹¹ What an experience! I am now living proof that a person can learn new fields and that it is imperative for teachers to avoid the "I Don't Know That; Therefore, I Can't Do It" position. If teachers can't learn new tricks, then it gives a lie to the entire educational process which they are supposedly directing, doesn't it?

Searching For Instructional Resources

Teachers and librarians face similar problems in searching for popular culture instructional resources. These difficulties are magnified when the materials being

sought are related to contemporary music. Hit songs of today may be purchased from record shops (Camelot Music, Record Bar, or Peaches Records and Tapes), discount or department stores, and national record clubs (Columbia Record Club, Discount Music, or RCA Record Club). A collection's profile can sometimes be broadened beyond current hits ("Blue Bayou" by Linda Ronstadt) to include "Oldies" ("Sweet Little Sixteen" by Chuck Berry) by purchasing "Greatest Hits" collections. In addition, there are several record outlets throughout the United States -- Aardvark Music in Los Angeles, California; The House of Sounds in Darby, Pennsylvania; and the Music Mart in Cincinnati, Ohio -- that specialize in buying and selling records from the 1950's and 1960's. Yes, their prices are quite high.

But why purchase records when they can be acquired for free? Donated collections, though undeniably non-selective in composition, can be a library budget's godsend as a cheap source of popular culture materials. The primary sources of donated recordings are private collectors, radio stations, and professional musicians. It's amazing to me that when a record collector dies, his or her family generally doesn't know what to do with all that 33-1/3, 45, or 78 r.p.m. "junk" that was the collector's treasure. Librarians should be standing at graveside with open arms to receive these plastic pieces of oral history. Deejays and radio station managers will often send promotional copies of recordings to libraries; and, if you establish long-term relations with them, they may even send you non-promo albums rather than dumping them into their record storage vaults. You might even be fortunate enough to establish a record-giving relationship with a pop performer. I wrote an article on Jass pianist Les McCann in 1976 and his wife kindly sent me copies of all of his recent albums. My point is that there are numerous ways to acquire popular records.

The next question which you might ask is where can a librarian or teacher go to find sample teaching units using popular music? I really can't give you a suitable answer to this request. I can suggest some general journal resources -- Social Studies, The Popular Culture Association Newsletter, Audio-Visual Instruction, Social Education, Media and Methods, Popular Music in Society, the Journal of Popular Culture, and the English Journal. Each of these magazines has presented one or

two fine articles dealing with the construction of popular music teaching resource units during the past decade. There simply is not much instructional guidance material available. Most scholars tend to write in a strictly theoretical vein, ignoring the resource/methodology issues which are so crucial to teachers. As far as drawing ideas from functioning instructional models, most people who are actually employing recordings in their classes seem to be so busy teaching and organizing that they don't publish anything about what they are doing. That's a shame because the successes they are having ought to be communicated to larger teaching publics.¹²

In contrast to the dearth of teaching units, lyric resources are plentiful. The Carlton Publishing Company of Derby, Connecticut has been producing Hit Parader, Song Hits, Rock and Soul Hits and numerous other monthly lyric journals for over three decades. I should warn you, though, that the lyrics which appear in the Carlton magazines may not be exactly the same as those sung on the popular record. I invariably transcribe lyrics from recordings, but it's much easier to do this if you have a publication available which contains at least three-fourths of the correct words. Album covers and protective slip sheets bearing lyrics are more accurate lyric sources for students and teachers. Recently Billboard magazine reported a burgeoning publishing market for the lyrics of pop tunes in music stores.¹³ Although the focus of this movement is on instrumentation, lyrics are generally provided for each of the songs.

Disciplinary investigations of popular music -- usually unrelated to teaching, are more common today than they ever have been in the past. This scholarly activity is indicative of the general growth in popular culture study. The areas of sociology, economics, music, English, and history have already produced some fine works,¹⁴ and much more will be written in the next decade. A much wider perspective on the popular music scene -- well beyond the present traditional approaches to the songs of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, or Bob Dylan -- should emerge during the 1980's. There are so many people beyond the singers and songwriters who are influential in the contemporary music industry that it is certain to stimulate some very interesting research on the non-star aspects of popular music.¹⁵

Concluding Comments -- And Challenges

I'd like to close my presentation this morning by raising some issues that I feel will have direct influence on the development of the popular culture movement. Consideration of these items by librarians, teachers, and other concerned parties is absolutely necessary if the study of contemporary music, and the entire popular culture field of scholarly examination, is to survive. I'm saying, "We've come a long way, baby; but if some other things don't happen soon, we're never going to move past the adolescent stage of academic development."

First, in-service training programs for high school teachers in popular culture methods and resources must be initiated immediately. The success of this endeavor may be related to the ability of spokesmen such as Russel Nye and Ray B. Browne to secure funding support from agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities. There must be an organized educational forum to bring people who are currently teaching with popular music resources into contact with other more traditionally-trained teachers in order to give the latter group a sense of the breadth of the popular culture materials and approaches that are available.

Second, regional resource centers for the accumulation, cataloging, and distribution of popular culture materials must be created. Every institution can collect some distinctive contemporary items, but central repositories must be established to collect everything. Then we are going to need some kind of -- and I hesitate to use the term for fear of being stoned -- an interlibrary loan system for audio and visual resources. It's very convenient for me, as an individual teacher, to be able to write to Bowling Green, enclosing a blank recording tape asking for a recording of seventy different songs that I need for my classes. Imagine what a mammoth task this would be if there were 5,000 times as many people writing to Mr. Schurk each day with similar requests.

Third, graduate programs with particular emphasis on educating teaching generalists about popular culture media resources must be inaugurated. A few such programs are already being planned, but only a few.

Fourth, a program to define core or basic collections of popular culture recordings for all academic libraries must be launched.¹⁶ Despite recent research efforts in both American and European sources, I'm having trouble finding any discography that logically depicts a basic collection of popular recordings from 1950 to the present.

Fifth, efforts must be increased by media resource specialists to train faculty members in the use of audio-visual equipment. Instructors' fear of media equipment is a serious psychological hurdle that must be overcome. I thought that that issue had been resolved a long time ago, but it hasn't. And when I talk about doing something with an audio tape, somebody yells, "Oh, God making a tape! I can't even run a taperecorder!"

Sixth, major funding support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Ford Foundation, or the Lilly Endowment must be secured to protect and preserve recorded musical resources. I don't know how we will overcome the concept of "elite" versus "popular" music which currently dominates the thinking of many chairmen of the funding boards, but this must be accomplished. It will take a significant amount of money to assemble, categorize, and preserve the kinds of irreplaceable recorded materials described in the recent Wilson Library Bulletin article by Gordon Stevenson.¹⁷

Seventh, scholarly organizations such as the National Council for Social Studies, the American Historical Association, the American Library Association, and Modern Language Association must be urged to establish subcommittees to study potential uses of popular culture materials. This task has already been accomplished in a few cases. It's somewhat discouraging to me as a historian to note that so many of the major professional journals in my field continue to produce traditionally-documented, research oriented articles as if nothing had changed in terms of teaching, technology, or scholarship since 1900. However, some young historians, and some not-so-young historical scholars who are publically acknowledging that one of the chief reasons why enrollments in survey history courses are dwindling is because professors haven't

paid much attention to changing student needs, have begun to establish journals featuring teaching-oriented popular culture essays. The History Teacher, The News Network Exchange, the AHA Newsletter, Teaching History, and History and the Social Science Teacher (Canadian) are among the new magazines that really are doing exciting things in terms of speaking for the use of popular culture resources.

Eighth, the publication of instructional manuals which outline records, books, course outlines, and teaching resources related to popular music must be sponsored.

Finally, a system of interlibrary loan taping must be developed without violating existing copyright laws. This recommendation implies that librarians should begin working toward the free (and I emphasize "free") re-production of copyrighted popular music records and tapes as learning resources. This request might be modified to suggest the creation of a series of K-Tel recordings, if you are acquainted with the K-Tel system of song anthology production.

The ultimate challenge to academic librarians and media specialists is to do anything and everything to build bridges via the library function between all elements of the academic environment. First, faculty members and students must be made aware of the potential academic uses of non-traditional popular culture resources and audio-visual equipment; second, breakthroughs must be initiated in the professional literature and scholarly organizations for suggesting new ideas and techniques for teaching. It's a big job! But, it's a challenge that librarians can avoid only at the risk of becoming useless cogs in the learning enterprise.

NOTES

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²Gordon Stevenson, "Popular Culture and the Public Library," in Advances on Librarianship -- VII, edited by Melvin J. Voight and Michael H. Harris (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 177-229; Gordon Stevenson, "The Wayward Scholar: Resources and Research in Popular Culture," Library Trends, XXV (April 1977), 779-818; Gordon Stevenson (ed.) "Trends in Archival and Reference Collections of Recorded Sound," Library Trends, XXI (July 1972), entire issue.

³B. Lee Cooper, "The Traditional and Beyond: Resources for Teaching Women's Studies," Audiovisual Instruction, XXII (December 1977), 14-18ff.; B. Lee Cooper, "Folk History, Alternative History, and Future History," Teaching History: A Journal of Methods, II (Spring 1977), 58-62; B. Lee Cooper, "Exploring the Future Through Popular Music," Media and Methods, XII (April 1976), 32-35ff.; B. Lee Cooper, "Teaching American History Popular Music," The AHA Newsletter, XIV (October 1976), 3-5; B. Lee Cooper, "Popular Music and Academic Enrichment in the Residence Hall," NASPA Journal, XI (Winter 1974), 50-57; B. Lee Cooper, "Rock Music and Religious Education: A Proposed Synthesis," Religious Education, LXX (May-June 1975), 289-299; B. Lee Cooper, "Examining Social Change Through Contemporary History: An Audio Media Proposal," The History Teacher, VI (August 1973), 523-534; and B. Lee Cooper and Larry S. Haverkos, "The Image of American Society in Popular Music: A Search For Identity and Values," Social Studies, LXIV (December 1973), 319-322.

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⁵B. Lee Cooper, "Teaching Contemporary History From An Audio Perspective -- 'The Image of American Society in Popular Music'," The Library-College Experimenter, II (November 1976), 22-34.

⁶B. Lee Cooper, "Oral History, Popular Music, and Les McCann," Social Studies, LXVII (May/June 1976), 115-118. Also see B. Lee Cooper, "Popular Songs as Oral History: Teaching Black History Through Contemporary Audio Resources" scheduled for publication early in 1978 in the International Journal of Instructional Media.

⁷Jerome L. Rodnitzky, Minstrels of the Dawn: The Folk-Protest Singer as a Cultural Hero (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, Inc., 1976); Richard A. Rosenstone, "'The Times They Are A-Changin'': The Music of Protest," The Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Sciences, CCCLXXXI (March 1969), 131-144; and Carl I. Belz, "Popular Music and the Folk Tradition," Journal of American Folklore, LXXX (April-June 1967), 130-142.

⁸Bob Marlin, Turn It Up (I Can't Hear The Words): The Best of the New Singer/Song Writers (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973); Bruce Pollock, "Paul Simon: Survivor From the Sixties," Saturday Review, III (June 12, 1976), 43-44ff.; and Harold F. Mosher, Jr., "The Lyrics of American Pop Music: A New Poetry," Popular Music and Society, I (Spring 1972), 167-176.

⁹B. Lee Cooper, "Review of 'Chuck Berry's Golden Decade'," The History Teacher, VIII (February 1975), 300-301.

¹⁰Bernard Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1952); Richard W. Budd, Robert K. Thorp, and Lewis Donohew, Content Analysis of Communications (New York: Macmillan Company, 1967); George Gerbner et al., The Analysis of Communication Content (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1969); O. Holsti, Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969); and Ithiel de Sola Pool (ed.), Trends in Content Analysis (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1959).

¹¹The following essays have resulted from this intensive research period: B. Lee Cooper, "Bob Dylan, Isaac Asimov and Social Problems: Non-Traditional Materials for Reflective Teaching," International Journal of Instructional Media, IV (1976-77), 105-115; B. Lee Cooper, "Futurescope," Audiovisual Instruction, XXI (January 1976), 42-48; B. Lee Cooper, "Popular Music, Science Fiction, and Controversial Issues: Sources for Reflective Thinking," The History and Social Science Teacher, XII (Fall 1976), 31-45; B. Lee Cooper, "Beyond Flash Gordon and 'Star Wars': Science Fiction and History Instruction," to be published in Social Education

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¹²Rodney J. Barth, "Popular Culture, the Media, and Teaching English," English Journal, LXV (March 1976), 84-88; Barbara Farris Graves and Donald J. McBain, Lyric Voices: Approaches to the Poetry of Contemporary Song (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1972); Anne W. Lyons, "Creative Teaching in Interdisciplinary Humanities: The Human Values in Pop Music," Minnesota English Journal, X (Winter 1974), 23-31; David E. Morse, "Avant-Rock in the Classroom," English Journal, LVIII (February 1969), 196-200ff.; James Petterson, "Using Popular Music to Teach Topics in American History Since 1950 For High School Students" (Unpublished Thesis for the M. S. Ed. Degree at the University of Southern California, 1977); David R. Pichaske (ed.), Beowulf to Beatles (New York: Free Press, 1972); Robert H. Reid, "Philosophy Teacher Tunes in Students With Rock Music," The Cleveland (Ohio) Plain Dealer, (February 20, 1977), 20; Jerome L. Rodnitzky, "Popular Music in American Studies," The History Teacher, VII (August 1974), 503-510; and Graham Vulliamy and Ed Lee (eds.), Pop Music in School (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

¹³Stephen Traiman, "Print Music Has Brilliant Future With Top Songbooks: Education, Religious Markets Blossom," Billboard Magazine, (March 12, 1977), 42ff.

¹⁴Carl I. Belz, The Story of Rock, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); R. Serge Denisoff, Sing a Song of Social Significance (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972); Charles Keil, Urban Blues (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); Greil Marcus, Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'N' Roll Music (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1975); and Arnold Shaw, The Rockin' 50's: The Decade That Transformed the Pop Music Scene (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1974).

¹⁵Steve Chapple and Reebee Garofalo, Rock 'N' Roll Is Here To Pay: The History and Politics of the Music Industry (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishing Company, Inc., 1977); R. Serge Denisoff, Solid Gold: The Popular Record Industry (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1975); Charlie Gillett, Making Tracks: Atlantic Records and the Growth of a Multi-Billion-Dollar Industry (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1974); Charlie Gillett, The Sound of the City: The Rise of Rock and Roll (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1970); Jonathan Kamin, "Parallels in the Social Reactions to Jazz and Rock," Journal of Jazz Studies, II (December 1974), 95-125; Richard A. Peterson and David G. Berger, "Cycles in Symbol Production: The Case of Popular Music," American Sociological Review, XL (April 1975), 158-173; Richard A. Peterson and David G. Berger, "Entrepreneurship in Organizations: Evidence From the Popular Music Industry," Administrative Science Quarterly, XVI (March 1971), 97-106; Richard A. Peterson and David G. Berger, "Three Eras in the Manufacture of Popular Music Lyrics," in The Sounds of Social Change: Studies in Popular Culture, edited by R. Serge Denisoff and Richard A. Peterson (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1972), 282-303; and Jon H. Rieger, "The Coming Crisis in the Youth Music Market," Popular Music and Society, IV (1975), 19-35.

¹⁶B. Lee Cooper, "An Opening Day Collection of Popular Recordings: Beginning The Search For Discographic Standards" (Unpublished Essay, 1977).

¹⁷Gordon Stevenson, "Race Records: Victims of Benign Neglect in Libraries," Wilson Library Bulletin, L (November 1975), 224-232.

AFTERNOON SESSION

WIEGAND: This afternoon's session will deal with popular culture and its practical applications for academic and public librarianship. To discuss this topic we could think of no better person to ask than Dr. Gordon Stevenson, Associate Professor at the School of Library and Information Science at the State University of New York at Albany. Dr. Stevenson has a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in music from Duke University and a Master's and a Ph. D. in Library Science from Indiana. He is author and editor of nearly 30 publications including "Popular Culture Studies in Library Education" in the Journal of Education for Librarianship, "Race Records" in Wilson Library Bulletin, "Sound Recordings" and "Popular Culture and the Public Library" in two separate issues of Advances in Librarianship, and "Wayward Scholar: Resources and Research in Popular Culture" in Library Trends. This afternoon he will speak to us on "Popular Culture and the Academic Librarian." Would you welcome, please, Dr. Gordon Stevenson?

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"Popular Culture and the Academic Librarian¹"

Introduction

There are some things that most of you already know about the recent rise of academic interest in popular culture; but I want to take note of them in order to provide a background for what I have to say. They center around this question: How has it come about that such activities as watching television, reading comic books or confession magazines, and collecting recordings by Roy Acuff or Chuck Berry have anything to do with formal education and libraries which serve the needs of formal education? In other words: What, exactly, are we doing here today? After all, it has been to get us away from such diversions that our parents sent us to school; and for most of the twentieth century, popular culture has been thought to be the opposite of education. Why has this begun to change?

The underlying causes for the change in attitude towards popular culture are quite complex. Fundamentally, I think the change has something to do with a new way of looking at the meaning of life in the twentieth century. It also has a lot to do with what we conceive the functions of formal education to be. The idea that libraries and education institutions should be involved in "transmitting a cultural heritage" is subtly changing to the idea that our function is to help students deal with a cultural milieu into which they were born, over which they have little control, which is constantly changing, and which cannot be properly identified as a "cultural heritage" by any stretch of the imagination.

Perhaps more important, what it is that we think constitutes art--or an aesthetic experience--is today being seriously reconsidered (not by everyone, of course, but by enough serious critics to suggest that this will soon become an important issue in academia). To speak of "art" is to speak of quality, standards, values, and other issues which are, in the end, very subjective. For this reason, to discuss popular culture (i.e., popular art) as an academic discipline is to raise unusual problems which would not likely come up in considering any other discipline. Many of these problems have not been resolved.

The mechanical aspects of what has happened are not so complicated; and the rise of popular culture studies is not a very long story.² About ten years ago, a rather small group of scholars began to take popular culture seriously. Perhaps they had taken it seriously for a long time, but a decade or so ago they began to do something about it. An association was formed (the Popular Culture Association), and a new journal (the Journal of Popular Culture) was published. Annual conferences were held and a newsletter was published. Soon there were area chapters of the Popular Culture Association. More recently--actually within the past six months--two new general popular culture journals have appeared, The Popular Culture Scholar and Popular Culture.³ The Editor of the Journal of Popular Culture has been receiving so many manuscripts that it has been decided that there will soon be a third new journal, The American Culture Magazine.⁴

Organizations which traditionally had nothing to do with popular culture began to take an interest in it, so we find that professional associations in music, history, and literature now have their committees or subcommittees on popular culture. Note, for example, that the traditionally academic and elitist Music Library Association has shown an interest in popular culture by including fine bibliographic surveys in its publication Notes.⁵ When the Music Library Association begins to take popular music seriously, I know that there are going to be profound changes in libraries.

In hundreds, perhaps thousands, of high schools, colleges, and universities there are now courses in selective aspects of popular culture. I suspect that one of the fastest growing areas of popular culture teaching is the American high school. Where all of this will lead, I would hesitate to predict. But it is obvious that fundamental changes are taking place in education. It seems to me that this has all been quite spectacular. The movement seems to gather momentum the longer it goes on.

Obviously, there are other factors from outside the walls of academia that have influenced the course of events. Despite the long and involved debate over the effects--psychological and sociological--of exposure to media, this remains an important issue, a frontier area of research. Surely there are few people today who would suggest that it is possible to study the impact of media on society without studying the popular culture diffused by the media. This question of the effects of media communications is central to the problem of laying a foundation for studying the impact (i.e., the "effects" and the "effectiveness") of library services. How can we possibly understand, measure, plan, or evaluate the effects of library service if we do not understand the effects of communications?

Before commenting specifically on what all of this has to do with academic libraries, I want to make a few much more general comments on the larger impact of both popular culture studies and popular culture itself on a wide range of different types of libraries, academic, public, and school. In a somewhat circular fashion, I am going to get around to commenting on two basic ways of thinking about popular culture in relationship to libraries. The first is theoretical, the second is practical. The first deals with the impact of popular culture on the intellectual and cultural environments in which we live and in which we run our libraries. Be they school, public, or academic libraries, they are all--directly or indirectly--touched by popular culture. Whether we like it or not, we are part of the twentieth century. The second approach deals with the more specific issues surrounding more-or-less traditional functions of libraries in acquiring, organizing, and diffusing various systems of packaged information.

Libraries and Science Fiction

To find some appropriate way of getting into my topic, I thought of several approaches, but finally decided that I could find what I needed if I turned to science fiction. This is not as far-fetched as you might think. Some of you who have followed the development of libraries in the United States during the past ten or twenty years may have noticed that for a while we had what could be described as "library science fiction." It seemed that most everybody was interested in writing and reading about what was going to happen someday, what was about to happen soon, what they thought would happen, and what they hoped would happen. It was, of course, automation that was about to transform our world. For example, about ten years ago we began to hear much talk about "closing out the card catalog." Librarians were setting up dates for these monumental transitions to the twenty-first century (at the same time, many of them were involved in projects to reclassify their book collections from the Dewey classification to the Library of Congress classification, apparently to make sure that some vestige of the nineteenth century will remain forever a part of American librarianship).⁶ At my own university, it was in 1972 that the announcement went out that in January 1975 the card catalog would be closed out. Well, it is now almost January 1978, and we are still using the same old card catalog. In any case, when it comes to writing science fiction, librarians are not really very talented, so I turned to my favorite anthology of science fiction, Robert Silverberg's Mirror of Infinity.⁷ This is what I read:

Perhaps I am deceived by old age and fear, but I suspect that the human species--the unique human species--is on the road to extinction, while the Library will last on forever: illuminated, solitary, infinite, perfectly immovable, filled with precious volumes, useless, incorruptible, secret.⁸

This interesting and depressing thought is the rumination of an old librarian who appears as the chronicler in Jorge Luis Borges' short story, "The Library of Babel." This fascinating library contains all of the books ever published anywhere in the world.

You could call it a librarian's library. Its size is beyond imagination, indeed it is infinite. People have gotten lost in the hexagonal stacks of this library. Some have gone mad. And all this in search of books which are seldom found, and if they are found they are unreadable. Borges writes: "Like all men of the Library, I have traveled in my youth. I have journeyed in search of a book, perhaps of the catalogue of catalogues."⁹ Despite its truly magnificent collection of materials, some people are not entirely satisfied with this library. As Borges writes: "The impious assert that absurdities are the norm in the Library and that anything reasonable . . . is an almost miraculous exception."¹⁰ I got the impression that the only people in this library were the librarians--everyone else was watching television, reading paperback fiction, or jabbering away on their CB car radios.

Borges' library is the complete ivory tower, accessible only to the experts and even they have gotten confused. What is this library? Borges' definition is inscrutable: "The Library is a sphere whose consummate center is any hexagon, and whose circumference is inaccessible."¹¹ Whatever it is, one cannot but conclude that somewhere along the line, Borges' library got out of hand. Perhaps it was a question of ends and means. The ends were forgotten and the means became ends in themselves, if you can follow me. Libraries exist for a purpose. Academic libraries, for example, do not exist for the sole purpose of conferring faculty status on librarians or to provide librarians with reasons to go to committee meetings. Nor do they exist for the sole purpose of providing up-and-coming young administrators with something to administer. But you know this already (indeed, some of you may have suffered the consequences of such absurdities). Academic libraries exist, as do school and public libraries, for the purpose of providing public services. There are different types of libraries for the obvious reason that there are different types of publics which need different types of services.

Policy Decisions: Public and Academic

Now, at long last you may think, we come to the central factor which separates academic libraries from

public libraries, and public libraries from most other types of libraries. And in this lies the unique style of the public library, the source of most of its problems, and a relationship to popular culture which is only remotely shared by other types of libraries. To put it simply, public librarians make policy decisions which affect the very substance of their services. Academic librarians are relieved, by their very nature, of making policy decisions of this sort. Why? Because policy decisions are made by the university, by the faculty, and by the framers of the curriculum. In other words, academic librarians acquire what they need to carry out the educational and research policies of the universities of which their libraries are a part and without which they would not need to exist.

I say all of this with a few minor reservations, and without wanting to suggest that academic librarians are so constrained that they cannot show some imagination and style in building their collections. But in the end, and for the most part, the "needs" of our institutions determine what we do in building our collections.¹² If popular studies flourish, if the ranks of the Popular Culture Association continue to grow, then there is no doubt in my mind that academic librarians will respond to these developments. But whatever battles are fought to determine the future role of popular culture studies will more than likely be fought by scholars and administrators, not by librarians in higher education.

Another word about public libraries. By accepting the idea of a hierarchical structure of culture, librarians for a hundred years have had a socially acceptable rationale for their collecting policies. I don't have to tell you that since the last quarter of the nineteenth century at least, public libraries have always been on the side of truth and beauty. Stem the tide of cheap popular novels! Lead the young to the best, the most enduring, the noble, and the great! Down with trash! In the Public Library Standards of 1958, one of the stated aims of the public library is "to encourage wholesome recreation and constructive use of leisure time."¹³ And there was a time before that, in the 1920's, when the public library was called the People's University. But you know that

in the late 1950's, the constructive use of leisure time did not include listening to Elvis Presley recordings, reading comic books, or watching Milton Berle on TV. Nor did the curriculum of the People's University include the study of jazz, the country blues, or pulp magazines.¹⁴

But our conception of the function of the public library is beginning to change. In a recent issue of the Library Journal there was a report of the results of a survey of users and non-users of public libraries in North Carolina.¹⁵ Among other things, the researchers were interested in looking into the musical preferences of library users in comparison to the musical preferences of non-library users. This question in itself is not at all startling or original, though it is certainly an important question. What was startling to me was the assumption, the absolute, unqualified assumption, that libraries should acquire recordings of the types of music which people preferred.¹⁶ This may not strike you as unusual; but in fact, if this were to become the basic policy of public libraries in all of their acquisitions programs, we would have a completely different basis for public library service.

In many years of observing public libraries and in reading about them, I cannot say that, until a few years ago, I ever heard anyone say that their main purpose was to buy what people wanted them to buy. What people needed: yes. What seemed to be good for people: yes. What was academically and educationally acceptable: yes. But what people wanted? No--to be sure, not an unqualified no; but "yes" only to the extent that popular preferences of people happened to match up with some socially acceptable principles. One of the traditional foundations of library service is this: There are good books and there are bad books. There is great music and there is third-rate music--or so we have been led to believe. If this isn't true, if librarians don't have that anymore--and I believe that they don't have it--then, believe me, it's back to the drawing board.¹⁷

If there is not a socially acceptable type of cultural behavior which the public library can encourage and perpetuate to the exclusion of other types of

cultural behavior, then we have a problem. If, for example, the recordings of Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention are a kind of art, if they do for their listeners whatever Beethoven does for his listeners, if neither experience is better for the individual or for society, then the public library has lost one of its basic functional foundations: the encouragement of upward cultural mobility. If I were a public librarian and if I decided to try to convert audiences from classical music to, say, bluegrass music or the country blues, I would be doing the exact opposite of everything the public library has claimed to be trying to do for a hundred years. I do not say that what has happened (this changing conception of the function of the public library) is a bad thing to have happened. On the contrary, public librarians will perhaps, for the first time, take a very close look at the nature of communications in the twentieth century.

The Academic Librarian

Now, let's contrast this with the problems faced by academic librarians. In theory, at least, the academic librarian is freed from the problem of trying to decide what is good for people and what is bad for them. Perhaps I am simplifying a complex problem, but it seems to me that if by some odd circumstance you found yourself as the bibliographer of an English Department where the bulk of the faculty were engaged in studying big-little-books, comic books, the poetry of Edgar A. Guest, and the syntax of letters to the "Dear Abby" column of the local newspaper, you would surely set out to acquire a collection of big-little-books, comic books, and the collected poetry of Edgar A. Guest; then you might set about indexing the "Dear Abby" columns. This would not strike me as an odd thing to do for the obvious reason that, as the English Department bibliographer, you are charged with serving the needs of the faculty as that faculty conceives its needs. So then, at a rather primitive level, we can conclude--if you agree with me--that the academic librarian can find rather clear-cut guidelines for policy decisions in terms of collection building. Surely the minimum competency in academic librarianship is to find out what the faculty needs in its research and teaching, and then set about getting these materials and organizing them.

What scholars do with these resources, as important as this may be, is not my concern here. However, there is a theoretical dimension to popular culture studies which can be related to library education and on which I will comment.

The Librarian's Professional Knowledge

In some ways the study of librarianship--or, rather, the concept of librarianship as a discipline--has a problem not unlike the problem that popular culture studies has. This is to say that this profession we call librarianship is a vast, sprawling field that accomodates a dozen different sub-disciplines; it is a profession that still cannot come to a general consensus as to what should constitute a core curriculum for the education of students. At the center we have what is indeed a very, very mushy sort of discipline. In trying to find some really basic and tangible dimensions to the field--something that gives it a unity--I find that I continually return to the writings of Jesse Shera. The following quotation has always struck me as being singularly pointed in identifying the heart of librarianship:

The focus of the librarian's professional knowledge . . . is the interaction between users and graphic records, and the influence which shape that relationship.¹⁸

This idea helps me to think about where our profession should be going in defining its cultural role. Essentially, Shera has marked off the right end of the traditional Shannon-Weaver mechanical model of a communications system which charts a message from its origins to its final destination in the mind of a person.¹⁹ This all happens in an environment and the various publics served by public libraries have different environments, as do the scholarly audiences served by academic libraries.

We now know that we can't really understand this relationship (i.e., the relationship between the user of recorded knowledge and the recorded knowledge itself) without studying both the document and the user. We can't study the process of communication without studying

the user. In the early history of the study of mass communications this was thought of as the effects of mass communications. Whatever we call it (the "effects of mass communication," "interaction," "impact," or "uses and gratifications of media"), this area of research has become a strange sort of academic crossroads. Scholars from a dozen different disciplines regularly cross through it, but they frequently don't see much of each other. I think of one of the London subway stations which is said to be one of the busiest crossroads in the world. On the surface, there are a number of different streets (i.e., disciplines) briefly meeting and then going their own way. Then one level underground there is a train going one direction, while two and three levels below this there are yet other trains going in other directions. All of this traffic is bearing scholars interested in what we once called "the effects" of communications. I note that since the early 1960's there has been work from scholars of English literature. They are interested in the reading process: What happens when readers read books? There is a new sub-discipline of mass communications research which studies what are specifically identified as the "uses and gratifications" of media exposure.²⁰ Behavioral psychologists serving marketing research are also down there somewhere, passing through this busy intersection, as are some educators and a few librarians.²¹

Thus, more and more scholars have become interested in communications as a process, something that happens. This is where librarians have a problem, because we still think largely in terms of the contents of message packages. That may be all right, but when it comes to packages dealing with what could be loosely called aesthetic or entertainment information, it is indeed a new ball game.

The diversity of interests in the study of the results of communication doesn't bother me at all--I find it quite exciting. We really stand at the beginning, or near the beginning, of something which is going to be very, very important. How astonishing to read this statement by no less an authority than Wilbur Schramm: "More than half of all of the research ever conducted on human communication has become available only in the last eighteen years."²² Even when

noting that Schramm wrote this in 1970, one is still astonished. And here is something written by Walter Slatoff in 1970 and quoted with approval by Norman Holland a few years ago: "We know practically nothing about the process of reading and the interaction of man and book."²³ When Holland made a detailed psycho-analytic study of the responses of five readers of one short story, he found that each reader read the story differently, each took the story and used it. Each interpreted the story and its characters in the light of his or her own psychological profile.²⁴ It is this sort of thing which I find exciting about the cultural functions of libraries--we know practically nothing about them, but we now have, from inter-disciplinary sources, new models, concepts, and approaches to use in studying them.²⁵

A Continuing Debate

Recently, I had begun to believe that the old controversies over popular and elite culture were largely over. Talking forever to myself, to sympathetic colleagues, and to students, the issue no longer seemed worth considering. But quite recently, I read an article by Hilton Kramer in the New York Times Sunday arts section. It was like the sort of experience that science fiction writers call a "time warp"--from 1977 I was carried back to the early 1950's (to the extensive attacks on popular culture, by the intellectuals and the elite, during those strange mixed-up years). What so upset Mr. Kramer was the announcement of President Carter's choice of directors for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He saw in the President's choices the heavy hand of politics. According to Kramer, this does not bode well for the future of the arts. There is, as he put it, "the specter of a catastrophic shift in government policy in cultural affairs."²⁶

It is not surprising that the issue of popular versus elite culture has reemerged, for we are talking about how the government should spend around 178 million dollars. So, both the NEA and the NEH will be under close scrutiny by the elite press during the coming years. If there is a change in the direction to "populism" of the sort anticipated by Kramer, we can look forward to many acrimonious debates.²⁷

One problem in most of the debates about the relative merits of high art and popular culture, is that there are many people willing and able to defend high art and our large cultural institutions (e.g., the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York). It is not at all difficult to defend the culture of Western civilization. But who is there around to speak in defense of jazz, the country blues, and old-time fiddle players? Not very many people are on hand to defend these popular and folk arts. And those who could defend them move in the wrong political and cultural circles. The point is that one really can't go around attacking Beethoven, or Rembrandt, or Shakespeare, or the Metropolitan Museum of Art. So those of us who speak for popular culture, it seems, must always argue defensively. For example, the Executive Director of the New York Metropolitan Opera said: "We must not end up fertilizing weeds instead of flowers."²⁸ This can be roughly translated as "Give Federal money to the Metropolitan Opera, not to amateur opera companies in Podunk or to forms of popular art." But then, how could one expect the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Opera to say anything else? But this raises the question of why anyone asked his opinion in the first place. In any case, it seems that--despite the extensive interest in popular culture among academic scholars--it remains, as it has for a century, a controversial topic which generates arguments which are likely to be emotional rather than logical. It is probably asking too much to expect debates over the artistic quality of popular culture to be completely rational.

Systematic and Ad Hoc Decisions

Assuming that academic librarians do decide to serve the interests of students and researchers interested in popular culture, the answer is surely not a series of ad hoc decisions made by several hundred librarians in several hundred different libraries. That would be a nineteenth century answer to a twentieth century problem. We have been talking about library networks for at least twenty years, and other types of cooperative programs for a hundred years. We have convinced ourselves that we are a profession.

Let's act like a profession. This means: let's bring popular culture studies into our association, let's talk about it, let's exchange ideas, let's set up standards, let's work together to share experiences and materials. The times may be bad in terms of our economic resources, but they are certainly rich in terms of possibilities of cooperation.

The major problem right now is a national problem--or, perhaps it would be better to say that the solution to the problem should be considered nationally. Popular culture scholars are simply not that numerous on any single campus, that they have much visibility, and they certainly have little political power. For example, I wonder how many academic scholars are interested in, say, country and western music. How many would you think? Perhaps throughout the United States there may be twenty people (in higher education) who are seriously interested in C & W research. There is Bill Malone at the University of Texas, there are a number of people attached to the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, Archie Green has done a lot of work in C & W music, and there are a few others.

It seems to me that this specific example of research in C & W is a beautiful illustration of the really large basic question that the profession ought to begin to deal with. It is a problem quite different from the problem of dealing locally with the needs of students and faculty. Where are the best and most comprehensive collections of C & W music? How can you get copies of out-of-print recordings if you need them? Who has the responsibility of systematically collecting and documenting the history of C & W music?

I have used C & W only as an example. Is C & W important? Yes, it is very important. Aside from the fact that it is an important part of the musical heritage of the United States, and aside from its intrinsic value (which I happen to think is quite considerable), it is an important system of communication. As you may know, there is much interest on the part of both government policy makers and academic researchers in the structure and nature of "blue collar" life. How could anyone possibly pretend to

some understanding of life of working class people without understanding their music? It can't be done. Thus, C & W is a massive, virtually untapped resource for the study of working class values and ideologies. Most librarians I have met think this music is quite funny and are rather nonplused at the idea of taking it seriously.

At the other extreme, we could examine science fiction, for here we have a quite different situation. We know that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of school and college courses are offered in SF, there are hundreds of anthologies, histories, and textbooks. And several libraries have fine SF collections. Why? Because SF has achieved a certain amount of academic respectability (not because it is qualitatively superior to other forms of popular culture).

The point I am trying to make is this: I hope that academic librarians will have the imagination to identify some of the, as yet, relatively underdeveloped areas (of research) and do something about them. If they wait for an area of popular culture to become academically respectable, it will be too late to do the job adequately without investing a lot more time and money.

Systematic Collecting

We should consider the possibility of a series, or network, of documentation centers devoted to specific areas of popular culture. The basis for such a system already exists. The Library and Audio Center at the Center for the Study of Popular Culture at Bowling Green University has the potential of developing into a major documentation center. Especially relevant here is the fact that the offices of Abstracts of Popular Culture are located at the Center in Bowling Green. Obviously, the Library of Congress plays an important role in the documentation of popular culture. Among its activities, its relationship to the Copyright Office may be extremely important. For example, one wonders what long-range impact will result from the Interim Copyright Law of 1972, which required depository copies of sound recordings. Another national institution involved in popular culture is the Smithsonian Institution.

Where are the current library resources in popular culture? We do not as yet have a guide to them. However, a beginning has been made with the publication of Michael T. Marsden's "National Finding List of Popular Culture Holdings and Special Collection."²⁹ If librarians, academic and public, would register their holdings with Marsden, we might begin to get a picture of where we stand. In any case, I can not see any hope of a systematic national coverage of popular culture resources until the American Library Association finds a place within its organization to inventory current popular culture holdings and systematically consider problems involved in systematic collecting.

Some Technical Matters

Finally, here are a few issues which I think are relevant to the progress of academic libraries in serving students and scholars of popular culture:

1) To what extent are the traditional library systems of organizing information satisfactory for dealing with popular culture studies? I refer to our system of subject headings and our major classification schemes. Are they a help or a hindrance to research in popular culture?

2) With the structure of selection and acquisitions policies which seem to be based on bibliographers with subject specialties and responsibilities, where do we put popular culture? Keep in mind that most universities do not have popular culture studies departments and that its study is widely diffused through many quite different and unrelated disciplines. For example, are music bibliographers (those in universities) competent to select popular music materials? I doubt it, for there is generally nothing in their training or experience which suggests any serious relationship to popular music in such a way as to be useful to the interests of sociologists or anthropologists. Do other bibliographers in the humanities have enough knowledge of the social and behavioral sciences to bring relevant literature to the attention of popular culture scholars? I don't know, but directors of academic libraries would need to find out.

3) Are there ways that academic librarians can anticipate areas of popular culture research which will come up in the future? Can bibliographic organization actually contribute to the development of popular culture research? This raises the question of whether librarians simply follow in the footsteps of scholars or contribute to scholarship actively. Since the great bulk of popular culture research is based on recorded knowledge, on documentary evidence, it is very possible that the resources preserved in libraries can indeed open up new areas of research.

4) An area of bibliographic research that is relevant to the very substance of librarianship is the flow of information through the literature and among scholars. I would guess that the study of popular culture is facilitated by a dozen or more "invisible colleges." A study of the dynamics of these informal information networks would be most useful to librarians. The literature of secondary sources, which is vast and diffuse, is waiting for a series of studies (e.g., bibliometric analyses, citation analysis studies, content analyses).

5) The structure of popular culture research seems to be so diffuse as to defy classification. On the other hand, it may be possible to bring some order to the field by classifying its literature. The best way I can demonstrate this problem is to call your attention to Abstracts of Popular Culture.³⁰ The structure of the Abstracts (i.e., their system of organization suggests to me something very characteristic of the field. I do not believe that, with two exceptions, we are dealing with what can yet be called an inter-disciplinary area of research. The two exceptions are the program at Bowling Green University and the study of popular culture within American Studies Programs (in those cases where these programs are already inter-disciplinary). I mean that the impression I get is that anthropologists study popular culture from their discipline's point of view, that musicologists study it (if they study it, which is not often) from their traditional point of view, etc. In other words, the study of popular culture has been drawn into many disciplines, but this does not in itself necessarily mean that it is an inter-disciplinary study.

The purpose of any system of abstracts is to supply subject information, which means that the best way to organize them is by a system based on the identification and organization of subjects. Abstracts tell you what has been published, but how they tell you this is extremely important. This is why the best way to organize abstracts is to classify them. Abstracts of Popular Culture uses a basic A-to-Z system of entries based on authors' names. The central function of providing subject access is dealt with by an A-to-Z list of subjects, which serves as the index to the abstracts themselves.

I don't want to get into a detailed discussion of the uses of classification in organizing abstracts or anything else at this time. I do want to point out that the next step in the development of popular culture studies as a coherent and inter-related system should be the development of a classification system. If there is one area where research by librarians could contribute to popular culture research this is it: the construction of a classification scheme to display the secondary literature in such a way as to show the structure of the field, its frequently discrete subdivisions, the relationship of its various parts, and its relationship to other disciplines. Even as it stands, Abstracts of Popular Culture is an indispensable source. I am only suggesting that as the discipline begins to shape up into different sub-fields and gets some sort of overall profile, a modern classification system will be needed. I assume that this must be some sort of non-alphabetical system which makes use of facet analysis techniques, and that it will be used to provide a hard-copy classified print-out, while at the same time be so structured as to permit on-line interactive searching in automated systems. We need a system which can serve as a general national system, but which will permit librarians at the local level to provide an automatic SDI (Selective Dissemination of Information) service to the scholars they serve.

The above suggests to me that there are many unexplored dimensions to an examination both of popular culture as a discipline and the products of its research which are closely related to the types of research done by librarians and even information

scientists (perhaps, especially information scientists). The central issue, of course, is bibliographic control--the organization of materials for access. Acquiring materials, as important as that may be, is really only the beginning of public services. To move beyond this, I suggest that academic librarians study the study of popular culture (which is not the same thing as studying popular culture--though there is no reason why academic librarians should not do that if they want to). But, as I suggested above, we need to find some place within the American Library Association if we are to do what needs to be done.

NOTES

¹This is an edited and expanded version of the paper read at the Symposium. I have deleted certain "library jokes" and asides which are best forgotten, and have included some material which was not presented at the Symposium because of time limitations.

²Unfortunately, a history of the origins and rise of the Popular Culture Association has not been written. The relationship between the PCA and the Center for the Study of Popular Culture (Bowling Green University, Bowling Green, Ohio) is explained by Ray B. Browne in his "Two Loves Have I," Journal of Popular Culture 10 (Fall 1976), 490-94.

³By the Fall of 1977, only one issue of each of these two periodicals had been published. It remains to be seen if they can survive. The more popular of the two, Popular Culture, is edited by Brad Lang (P. O. Box 13066, Lansing, Mich., 48901), and the scholarly and academic Popular Culture Scholar (described as "a journal of theory and analysis") is edited Pearl G. Aldrich (Frostburg State College, Frostburg, Md., 21532).

⁴The first issue of American Culture Magazine has been announced for Jan., 1978. It will be edited by Ray B. Browne and Russel B. Nye, and published by the Center for the Study of Popular Culture.

⁵See, for example, "Popular Music: A Survey of Books and Folios With an Index to Recently Reviewed Recordings," ed. by Robert M. Jones, Notes, 34 (September, 1977), 216-21.

⁶Some enthusiastic champions of science fiction believe that it does have some bearing on the future of science. In the case of "closing out the catalog," the science fiction librarians seem to have been harbingers of change. A recent issue of the Library of Congress Information Bulletin (Vol., 36, No. 2, p. 743) has the headline: "LC to Freeze Card Catalog."

The full implication of using a "frozen" catalog are not yet clear. For example: Are there dangers of getting frostbitten fingers? Won't it melt during hot summers? It was my hope that LC would dehydrate its catalog, granulate it, and then freeze-dry it. To use a freeze-dried catalog, one would only have to add warm water and stir it. This idea, however, is probably too visionary for LC.

⁷Silverberg, Robert (ed.). The Mirror of Infinity: A Critic's Anthology of Science Fiction. (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1970).

⁸Borges, Jorge Luis: "The Library of Babel," in Silverberg, op. cit., 322.

⁹Ibid., 15-16.

¹⁰Ibid., 321.

¹¹Ibid., 316.

¹²I put the word "needs" in quotation marks because, within the context of library services as discussed in the library literature, it is an ill-defined concept which is seldom clarified. Its vagueness, however, is useful to the politics of librarianship, as may be noted in its loose use by lobbying groups. When we ask for Federal subsidies to improve library systems "to supply information to meet the needs of the people," there are few who will ask: What needs? Who will define them? How will you measure them? The "need for information," conceived as an inherent right, is a slogan representing a fundamental democratic ideology, with all of the characteristics of a useful ideology. In the field of academic librarianship, of course, "needs" can be defined (they are not ideological, but practical, and emerge from the needs--functions, purposes, activities--of the larger cultural institution).

¹³American Library Association, Public Libraries Division. Public Library Service: A Guide to Evaluation With Minimum Standards. (Chicago: ALA, 1958), 4.

¹⁴I do not mean to suggest that the people who used the public library did not get what they wanted (they probably did, which was why they used the library). A colleague of mine, who is director of a medium-sized public library serving a metropolitan population in a large urban complex, recently told me that if he were to introduce popular culture into his library, he would expect very strong opposition from the present users of the library. This is consistent with what we know about library use. Of course, many librarians are themselves strongly opposed to popular culture (in the public library if not in their own lives). About ten years ago, the director of a large regional system of public libraries told me that he did not think it would be appropriate for his system to acquire printed music for what is called a "chord organ," apparently on the assumption that it is too easy an instrument to perform and thus provides a corrupt aesthetic experience.

¹⁵Hays, Timothy; Shearer, Kenneth D.; and Wilson, Conception. "The Patron is Not the Public," Library Journal 102 (September 15, 1977), 1813-18.

¹⁶The music which most of the non-users of the library preferred fell into the category "Gospel/Religious," and I don't think that category (as defined in the survey) included Renaissance motets or masses, Baroque sacred cantatas, or Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis," but probably did include music by the Lilly Brothers, George Beverly Shea, and Mahalia Jackson.

¹⁷Of course, there are "good" books and there are "bad" books--there always were and there always will be. My point is that how we decide what is good and what is bad has been challenged, and that we should develop criteria based on the uses of information packages (i.e., communication is a process--the same book may be both good and bad, depending on who uses it, why it is used, how it is used, and what happens when it is used).

¹⁸Shera, Jesse H. The Foundations of Education for Librarianship. (New York: Becker and Hayes, 1972), 199.

¹⁹For an elementary introduction to non-mathematical models of communication, see: Schramm, Wilbur, and Roberts, Donald F. (eds.) The Process and Effects of Mass Communication, rev. ed., (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 3-53.

²⁰Blumler, Jay G., and Katz, Elihu. The Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1974. /Sage Annual Reviews of Communication Research, Vol. 1/.

²¹Information is, in some respects at least, a "product," something created, manufactured, and distributed to customers. Thus, the study of the behavior of consumers by those interested in marketing research has something to offer the study of librarianship. People make product choices, they also make information-source choices (and it does not seem logical to me to assume that the former can be studied and analyzed and that the latter cannot). For an interesting introduction, see: Robertson, Thomas S. Consumer Behavior. (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1970).

²²Schramm, Wilbur. "The Nature of Communication Between Humans," in: Schramm and Roberts, op. cit., 4.

²³Slatoff, Walter J. With Respect to Readers: Dimensions of Literary Responses. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970), 188.

²⁴Holland, Norman N. 5 Readers Reading. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975). Professor Haynes McMullen called my attention to this area of literary research and its relevance to a consideration of popular culture vis-à-vis the library.

²⁵The sort of research conducted by Holland is, I believe, a realization of the sort of research proposed by Riesman more than a quarter century ago. At the time, Riesman was writing about the popular

music listening habits of young people, but clearly the conclusion he came to is relevant to the study of communications activities involving listening, watching, and reading: "One cannot hope to understand the influence of any one medium, say music, without an understanding of the total character structure of a person." See: Riesman, David. "Listening to Popular Music," American Quarterly 2 (1950), 371.

²⁶Kramer, Hilton. "The Threat of Politicalization of the Federal Arts Program," New York Times, October 16, 1977. The reason I find Kramer's article not only insulting but quite illogical is that NEA and NEH were, from the start, political. The only difference is that a different group of politicians is going to run things. It is absurd to argue that giving Federal subsidies to the Metropolitan Opera is not political and that to give funds to amateur opera groups is political. For Kramer, "keeping politics out of art" means : give the money to institutions which exemplify Kramer's conception of good culture.

²⁷The issue of Federal subsidies for the arts is a problem in more ways than one. We can say this of the popular arts: they are forged in the difficult, competitive milieu of our times. One way or another, without patronage and subsidies from the government, popular composers, writers, artists, and musicians must survive by producing works which people want and presumably need. Many of them have preserved their "artistic integrity" (or so I believe) and still managed to survive in the market place. I would think that the only legitimate use of Federal funds would be for the purpose of creating larger audiences. I would make a distinction between "creative" artists (e.g., composers, painters), who should not be subsidized, and "recreative" artists (e.g., performers), who should be subsidized for the purpose of more widely diffusing the art of music, as should institutions which display art works.

I would raise the issue of whether contemporary "art," produced in a vacuum (i.e., by artists and composers in-residence at universities), is of any value whatsoever. The virtually complete alienation of the contemporary "serious" composers--to say a

composer is "alienated" simply means that no one wants to or can even bear to listen to his or her music--was made possible to some extent by their employment in universities. However, it seems we have come to the end of an era, and some composers are now very interested in writing music in which the more-or-less average audience might find some beauty. See: Schonberg, Harold C. "Can Composers Regain Their Audiences?" New York Times, December 4, 1977.

²⁸Steele, Richard. "Culture: Populism vs. Elitism," Newsweek, (October 31, 1977), 39.

²⁹Marsden, Michael T. "National Finding List of Popular Culture Holdings and Special Collections." PCAN (Popular Culture Association Newsletter) 6 (March 1977), 5-28.

³⁰Abstracts of Popular Culture, Vol. 1-
Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University
Popular Press, 1976-

WIEGAND: "How does one become a popular culture librarian?" That's the first thing I asked Bill Schurk when he got off the plane yesterday. Bill's answer was interesting, and I repeat it here for those of you interested in the field as a possibility for future employment.

After graduating from high school, you enter the Engineering School Department at General Motors Institute but later drop-out because you don't like it. Then, you get a job with the Cadillac Ordnance Plant making tanks. However, when a Viet Nam war heats up, you find your way back into school which, in Bill's case, was Bowling Green State University where he graduated in 1966. After perceiving this as a dead end as far as popular culture is concerned you might try library school, which, for Bill, turned out to be Western Reserve University, to obtain a Master's degree in Library Science. By this time your undergraduate alma mater will be so impressed with your post degree achievements they will call you back to become Audio-Librarian. And that's just what happened to Bill. Since then he has added a second position to his title - Head of the Popular Culture Library.

What does a popular culture librarian do? Part of the answer to that question lies in the definition of the word "junking." You can't imagine how ecstatic Bill was when he found out that Lexington had Volunteers of America and Goodwill stores. Will you welcome please, Mr. William Schurk?

WILLIAM L. SCHURK

Head, Audio Center and Popular Culture Library
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, Ohio

"The Popular Culture Library at Bowling Green
State University"

Thanks Wayne. Before I go any farther, I would like to extend a personal and a group thanks to the University of Kentucky College of Library Science, and Wayne individually, for the hospitality which they have shown us. It has just been, as we say, "scramolious."

Now, we aren't going to get down to "brass tacks;" we're going to get down to the "wax." First, let me describe my situation at Bowling Green State University. It probably represents the first working relationship between academics and librarianship in the field of popular culture. When I joined Bowling Green State University's library faculty in 1967, I was already immersed in popular culture as a way of life. Collecting popular music records, old books, postcards, match packs, cigar bands, and so forth had already become an habitual activity for me. Consequently, when I was appointed Popular Culture Librarian in 1968, the position gave academic license to my previously extracurricular habits. Many people ask, "Just what are you getting paid for?" The answer is simple - my expertise in popular culture materials.

But being Head of the Audio Center and Popular Culture Library means more than the title signifies. Since 1967, I have built the Audio Center from nothing into a sizable record collection in order to support the curriculum offered at the University. Although pockets of collection activity had occurred elsewhere on campus (for example, the College of Musical Arts collected classical music; and the Language Labs collected language tapes) it was my job to build a record collection which would support other

University courses. First, I found myself building a collection of spoken word materials and recordings to support the folklore programs and some history of jazz courses. Then in 1968, we organized the Popular Culture Library to support an embryonic program of Popular Culture Studies under the direction of Dr. Ray Browne, an English Department Professor.

From 1968 to about 1973, Popular Culture courses were offered as a sub-department within the Department of English. In 1971, the University offered its first B. A. in Popular Culture. In 1972, it offered the M. A. and in the Fall of 1973, the Popular Culture Department became a separate entity. We are now in the process of trying to establish a Ph. D. program in American Culture. It is proposed to be a cross-pollination of courses in American Studies and Popular Culture and several other departments on campus which have expressed an interest in assisting and aiding the needs of the program. It is now up to the Chancellor's office to say "yes" or "no." Of course, we're hoping they say "yes."

The initial courses offered in Popular Culture, nearly ten years ago, were a fraction of what is now an extensive program. We started with courses in Popular Culture Media, Popular Literature, and Popular Arts and Entertainment. We have now built the curriculum around ten to fifteen courses offered by various departments on campus. For example, this quarter the Music Department is offering a course in Jazz History and the Popular Culture Department a History of Country and Western Music course. Last quarter, the Popular Culture Department also offered a course in the History of Blues Music in the United States. I am currently working with other departments to introduce more courses which would utilize the vast resources of the Audio Center and Popular Culture Library. To cite but one example, I can envision a whole course in the history of comedy in America.

As of now we have 15 graduate students in the graduate program, which to date has graduated approximately 50 M. A.'s. We had about 700 students in popular culture courses last quarter, of which 12 were popular culture majors and 20 popular culture minors.

The Audio Center and Popular Culture Library are primarily designed to serve the Popular Culture Department, but in fact, our patronage is much broader. Because of the expertise in popular culture materials which we can offer scholars and students, we have acquired a national reputation. The Audio Center which I started from nothing in 1967 has grown to a collection of 160,000 records, which includes very little classical music. If we took the albums and lay them on end one next to the other in a row, we would have enough to fill twice the length of a football field. We have about the same number of singles. Where did we get the money for this vast collection? Well, initially, we were fortunate enough to get Title II funds in 1969. About \$25,000 came to us this way. With this seed money, we were able to demonstrate our viability on campus and firmly establish our existence. Yet, my annual budget is embarrassingly low, and I must do the most with what little I get. To obtain the materials we need for the Audio Center and Popular Culture Library, I have to go to unconventional sources. Some of them are unbelievable. I visit junk stores, Volunteers of America, Goodwill, Stella Maris, and the Salvation Army. I go to garage sales and barn sales. I go through their stock and buy \$50 to \$100 worth of books for 10¢ to 15¢ each. This method provides excellent fiber for our collection but also provides me with some unusual experiences. I remember one time especially when I went into an ice house during the coldest day of the year to look at some books stored there. Although it took me a long time to recover, it was worth the trip because I got a whole car load of valuable books.

Another major source of materials is donations. We have acquired large amounts of material this way. But it is important to remember one thing when acquiring these gifts. We always take extreme care to assure the donor that we will take good care of his gift. Chances are he is donating his life-long pet. The last thing he wants is to see his collection fall into the hands of a library unable or unwilling to take proper care of the materials.

I remember one case very clearly. Back in my childhood days in Cleveland, a gentleman named

"Kousin Kay" / [Walter Kay] had a children's radio show entitled, "Kousin Kay and His Red Goose Merry-Go-Round," which was sponsored by Red Goose Shoes. After a while, I forgot about Kousin Kay. Then one day I got a letter from him from Cleveland. He wrote that he had hundreds of children's records from the later 1940's and early 1950's in his home and he was very frustrated because the libraries in Cleveland did not want his collection. Can you imagine how broken hearted he was? Well, I quickly wrote back that we would be extremely pleased to have them. My dad, one of my student assistants, and I went to Kousin Kay's house and loaded his entire record collection into a station wagon to take to Bowling Green. Kousin Kay was extremely pleased to see that his collection would be properly preserved and cared for.

This kind of experience has happened more than once. At the second Popular Culture Association meeting in Toledo in April, 1972, I met an Eastern Michigan University sociology professor. After initial introductions, he asked, "By the way, aren't you starting a rhythm and blues record collection?" I replied, "Yes, we've been working on this along with other material." He then countered, "Do you want my collection?" and he started naming such rhythm and blues luminaries as Little Walter and Muddy Waters, Little Richard, Bill Haley and the Comets. I was uncontrollable. When I went to his house, we spent the entire day listening to his records and talking about various memories. Then we loaded them up, and I took them down to Bowling Green. I saw him again last week at a conference, and we talked again about those records and that enjoyable day. One more anecdote. One of our steady sources is the local garbage man. After hearing I was an employed collector of sorts, he came up to me and asked, "What kind of stuff you buying?" I said, "All kinds of things." He said, "How about some pornography?" Naturally I replied, "What have you got?" Then he opened up a brick-brown bag and there it was. He quickly set a modest price; and since we were looking for this type of materials, I bought it. Some time later our paths crossed again. For a time I used to get bound early editions of the Detroit Free Press, which were being discarded by

another department of the University. I would take them home to cut out the Sunday funnies for our comics collection. One day my friend, the sanitation engineer, approached me and asked, "Are you interested in some old newspapers?" I replied, "Which ones?;" He said, "Detroit Free Press." I retorted, "You raided my garbage!" When I got home, I got the full story from my wife. Such is the life of a Popular Culture Librarian.

These are just some of the methods I use to acquire materials. A Popular Culture Librarian has no collection guide to aid him in acquisition decisions. Similarly, I cannot systematically plan to walk into a bookstore and pick up pertinent materials for an inexpensive price. Sometimes, I have to spend a lot of money for some necessary item. Yet with judicious attention and patient persistence, I can still pick up valuable items like the boy and girl novel series of the early 1920's at garage sales for 10, 15, 20¢ each. Some people would call them "collector's items," but I find that term abhorrent. It means tagging a price on something that is marketable. But as a Popular Culture Librarian, I don't look for the marketability of an item. Rather, I look for its intrinsic value as related to research to be used by a popular culture student or scholar.

The staff at the Popular Culture Library is not large. At present, I have one half-time cataloger doing only books and magazines, and one paraprofessional reference assistant. We have a lot of other materials just begging attention, but we just don't have enough people to cover them.

The general collections of the Popular Culture Library are probably worth half a million dollars. This includes the popular American series novels of the late 19th and early 20th century like the Hardy Boys, Tarzan, and Tom Swift and His Electric Grandmother. Much of the material is related to popular religion. Other areas of strength include materials covering the war periods of American history. Generally, these are the pictorial histories published during the war or immediately following it. Although they are usually technically poorly done, they nonetheless represent material published for the general

masses, and material which is related to the popular performing arts, sports, and popular religions.

We also collect Funk & Wagnalls and other old encyclopedias. I even have Tiny Tim's wedding taped from a Johnny Carson show. As you can readily see, the materials we include in the Popular Culture Library are not restricted to just book materials. We also have picture postcards, match book covers, posters, pennants, trading cards, bubble gum cards, cigarette cards, pinback pins, all types of political materials. We inherit a lot of collections from other parts of the University and the University Library because they don't know what to do with them. We had a beautiful collection of autographed pictures of early legitimate and not so legitimate theatrical performers, including George M. Cohan and George Jessel. We have one of Captain Video that I got from a friend who is an orthopedic surgeon down in Spartanburg. All of them are now framed and adorn the walls of the Popular Culture Library. We also have a huge collection of paperback fiction (now about two or three aisles long) which includes non-serious fiction. Most of them are paperback first editions I picked up for five or ten cents in junk shops in the literary areas of Westerns, Gothic Romances, Lust, Blood, Guts, and War. I also acquire phonograph recordings through auctions, by issuing bids through the mail. I am very pleased to say that what I have been doing at Bowling Green State University and the path which I have taken have never been challenged since I have been there. I am now in my eleventh year at the University. I have received numerous letters from people who want my job because they know I have been given a free hand in building a collection for the library. I have established my own selection pattern - a pattern which never has been challenged by students, librarians, faculty, or administration. I have proceeded along these lines and built my selection policy for the Popular Culture Library around what I think each academic department would need if they were teaching a popular culture course. This is my sole guiding principle for selecting materials for our collection.

A fine and perhaps more graphic statement of what we do in our Popular Culture Library and in our Popular Culture Program is stated in a video tape which I brought along with me. It was produced in conjunction with our Journalism Department, which assigned a student to do a promotional slide-tape presentation on the Popular Culture Library. We gladly assisted her in preparing the presentation which, in turn, has been made into a videotape. It includes stills from her slides, plus a lot of musical material taken from our own Audio Center collection. May we see the videotape now?

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

AUDIENCE: Mr. Schurk, you mentioned taping Tiny Tim's wedding from the "Johnny Carson Show." Will the new copyright law force you to alter your taping activities?

SCHURK: Well, quite frankly, we would love to have videotapes of current television programs on file; television programs like Mary Tyler Moore and All in the Family. We do have scripts to all of these shows, but to see something on paper is one thing, to see it on videotape is another. We do not tape systematically, but selectively. By the way, Michael Marsden, one of the faculty members in the Popular Culture Department, just received a \$20,000 grant to become involved in just what you are talking about in telecommunications and use in popular culture studies. As I understand it, if you are taping material for class, it's legal. If there is one person who is not a member of that class, you are violating copyright law.

AUDIENCE: Is anyone duplicating this stuff and selling it under the table?

SCHURK: I heard that some people are. In fact, I once offered my assistance to someone who talked about organizing some of this already duplicated material. I haven't heard anything from him since, and perhaps it's because he ran into copyright problems. We simply bring the tape directly to class. That way we don't have any problems. Once you start packaging something, you run into problems.

AUDIENCE: Don't most academic libraries segregate their popular culture materials - if they have any at all - into special collections, where they are used so seldom?

SCHURK: That's very true, but then, the question is "Why do they?"

AUDIENCE: At this university, we have a paperback science fiction collection. Our problem is, do we leave it in the regular stacks or shift it over to

special collections? Right now it is only being used by students for entertainment purposes and is being badly depleted.

SCHURK: And your faculty probably doesn't know the collection exists. Am I correct?

AUDIENCE: You are assuming, of course, that one only collects materials directly related to the curriculum.

SCHURK: Right.

AUDIENCE: That's not always true with special collections.

SCHURK: Of course, but here you are getting into the problem of who should be the watchdog for the student's leisure time. An analogous question would be, "Is the library supposed to be the alternate study area for the student who can't study in his own room even though he doesn't need library material?"

NYE: At Michigan State University, we have a tremendous detective story collection which serves a scholarly purpose. I have had students do papers tracing the origins and development of certain kinds of detectives, their social milieu, etc. At the same time, however, a lot of students go down to special collections, take the materials out and read them during lunch. There is nothing against it being entertaining. The same thing is true of our comics collection which can be, and is, the object of some serious study. Again, you find students who go down and read early editions of Superman or Marvel comics for recreation. Nobody seems to object and the students enjoy it. I see your point, though.

AUDIENCE: Should academic libraries start a popular culture collection even though there is no demand for it from faculty?

NYE: I think you could start a collection even before a faculty member asked about it. At MSU, we did that half by accident and half by chance. Our collection of boys' books started that way.

Only later did we find out that we had a very good basic collection of boys' series of Tom Swift and earlier ones and of girls' books, and that's when people got interested. The Women's Studies people, for example, got interested in studying girls' series books and seeing what happened in say 1910, 1917, 1920. It's sort of the chicken and the egg, I suppose.

AUDIENCE: Do you segregate those materials?

NYE: They're in our special collections because of several problems. One is the comic books. If they are not down there, they will get stolen in 24 hours. Another thing is that it concentrates it. At one time, we had a great many 19th century female novels scattered all through our library. In practice, they were really not available to students who didn't know where they were. Finally, our special collections people pulled them out of the main library and put them into special collections so that a student who wants to study the 19th century female domestic novel has them all in one place.

SCHURK: And chances are they were selected many years ago, right?

NYE: Surely, by accident.

SCHURK: Right, and probably no one knew they were there.

NYE: Nobody really knew they were there until they were collected and put into one place. Only then can you work with them.

SCHURK: And probably whoever selected them is not around to challenge the decision to put them into a special collection.

NYE: Oh, the library upstairs couldn't care less.

SCHURK: We have operated along the same lines. We have a separate Popular Culture Library primarily for one basic reason - security. But, the process of segregating popular culture materials also conveniently concentrates them into one specific place.

Secondly, it is much easier for someone doing serious research in popular culture to come to one place than to have to wander all over a strange library.

AUDIENCE: But when you select pop culture materials, aren't you labeling them by putting them into your special collection?

SCHURK: Don't say "pop" culture.

NYE: Yes, we do terrible things to people who say that.

SCHURK: Say "popular culture" or "P. C." To answer your question, with another question, what's wrong with that?

NYE: I think that these are individual library problems that can be solved on the basis of the individual library. For example, I had a student interested in cultural history as reflected in etiquette books, which, by the way, are a fine source. We found that the Home Economics Library had a fine collection of these dated in the early 19th century. They were very happy to get rid of them and give them to special collections. We found the same thing to be true with readers. Almost every child educated in the United States up to 1890 got his basic education out of a reader --the McGuffey and others we found scattered all over in various departmental libraries. We pulled them together so a student could go in and trace the popular poetry that students studied and memorized in 1830 to 1890 all in one place. I think these are individual problems. Don't you, Bill? But you're a librarian, why am I talking here?

SCHURK: It depends on the individual situation regarding the academic environment, the academic departments on campus, and how willing they are to assist you. Sometimes they may be willing to assist you in purchasing materials for your own collection. At BGSU, we have a budget problem. At one time, I held the purse strings of the Popular Culture Library because there was no established Popular Culture Department. As soon as the department was established, however, they got a library representative. Now she gets the money, she

distributes it among the various department faculty members, and I no longer have control of it. Of course, they choose books that can be used in their courses and will circulate in the regular library collection. Obviously, these books which support the popular culture studies are not part of the Popular Culture Library. That is precisely the reason we depend on gifts for our acquisitions more and more. I make no judgment between Saul Bellow and Jacqueline Suzanne. They should both go into the library collection.

AUDIENCE: What can popular culture materials do for the adult constituency of the public library in terms of programs?

STEVENSON: I think you have to decide what adults you are talking about first. Are you talking about the adults who live in the suburbs, blue-collar working class people, or married housewives who want to expand their interests? Whichever group you can define, I'm sure there is a particular popular culture medium which they would be delighted to have. In the North Carolina study I mentioned earlier, the whole purpose was to find out why certain people didn't use the library. Obviously, they didn't use it because the religious music they wanted was not there. They like gospel music. If the librarian wants them to use the library, he or she should buy gospel music. There is a clear difference between what you are referring to as a program and just regular service policy. A program would be something different, and I'm not quite sure what would be involved there in terms of popular culture. The main thing, however, is to identify your audience, identify the culture they want, and buy appropriate materials for them.

SCHURK: I have found from experience that because most public libraries, big or small, cater to a different audience than academic libraries, they have in many cases built their collections around popular needs and desires. Chances are good that they already have a built-in popular culture library. When I worked in the Cleveland Public Library, for instance, I remember an excellent collection of old movie magazines - the 051s [Dewey number] -

and back runs of tons and tons of other types of popular magazines.

STEVENSON: There are things which would come as a shock to you if you really wanted to develop a program. Could you imagine a library buying True Confessions magazine? True Confessions or Police Gazette, are works libraries ordinarily do not buy. It's almost a revolutionary thought to buy this drugstore, supermarket type of popular periodical. We don't do it. Yet, if that's what people read and you feel they should get what they want, you might try buying it for them.

NYE: In terms of creating a program, I remember that the East Lansing Public Library last year or the year before ran a series of discussions in which they chose a current book from each of the popular genre. I did Mary Stewart's Touch Not the Cat as a gothic, another fellow did Ross McDonald's Blue Hammer which had just come out, somebody else did a western, and so on. The library already had these books. The people were supposed to read these books before they came--a lot of them did, a lot of them didn't--and then we had a discussion. The series was quite successful. In fact, they were hanging from the walls. I didn't know that much about Gothics and it turned out that a lot of women in the audience knew much more than I. They really carried the discussion and did very well. The library subsequently did that again in a slightly different way by picking up on different topics. In fact, they did a series on books that had been turned into television plays and vice-versa. It seemed to go over very well.

AUDIENCE: Are there any areas of popular culture interest which have potential for libraries which the panel has not yet identified?

COOPER: I can think of a couple. One is materials for adult non-professionals who teach in church school programs. I think that these folks are always looking for some new gimmicks to attract youngsters. Another possible area is crafts. It seems to me that libraries could attract members of this clientele and also provide facilities for

demonstrations. I also think that you would be fascinated by the distinct cultural differences between the very small groups within the community who work with macramae and such creative handicrafts. It seems to me libraries should capitalize on these interest and augment their images as continuing learning centers.

AUDIENCE: Does any literature exist describing some of these examples?

STEVENSON: I haven't seen any systematic survey and very few reports of isolated examples. You're pretty much on your own.

AUDIENCE: I keep hearing this word "gimmick" and I wonder if popular culture isn't just being used to get people into classes or into the public library.

SCHURK: I think "gimmicks" are the last thing we look for. "Gimmicks" are manufactured and so is Popular Culture, but we do not try to stress popular culture just to promote classroom attendance. An academic atmosphere pervades our professional meetings. In fact, we gear them toward academic personnel. Very few public librarians attend the Popular Culture Association meetings.

WIEGAND: We have time for one more question.

AUDIENCE: How does Bowling Green's situation compare to other campuses?

NYE: Bowling Green is a kind of special situation. For historical reasons, they were able to create a separate Popular Culture Department. I think other universities and colleges find interest in popular culture materials dispersed. Perhaps somebody in the department of History, somebody in Anthropology, somebody in English, or somebody somewhere else is interested enough to begin to build courses or materials into their own courses in different departments. I think that's probably more the usual pattern. Bowling Green's administrative set-up is quite unusual because it is so integrated.

WIEGAND: That concludes our symposium. I want to take this opportunity to thank all four of our panel members for consenting to be with us today, and I feel confident that I speak for our entire audience in complimenting you four on your efforts. I also want to thank you, the audience, for the kind reception you have shown our guests. If I may, I would like to leave you all with one last thought which perhaps might measure the impact of the Popular Culture Symposium. When you pass that area of the Student Center with the large television screen on your way out of the building, pause to think for a moment why more students are there late on a Friday afternoon than over in the library. If you find yourself thinking twice about their reasons, the Popular Culture Symposium has affected you.